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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet examines the Writing-to-Learn project of the University of Tennessee (Knoxville), a writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) program. The WAC theory is first discussed in terms of three primary approaches to linguistic behavior as reflected in three predominant attitudes toward composition theory in use today: the traditional, the empirical, and the epistemic. Next, the Writing-To-Learn program is described, including three examples of two writing assignments and scoring guidelines for the readers. The pamphlet then discusses several of the lessons learned that faculty should consider prior to initiating such a program. Comments of Liberal Arts faculty, English faculty, students, and graders suggest that the writing-to-learn program not only demonstrated a successful way to implement writing-to-learn methodology, but also was recognized as a valuable experience. The benefits and values of the program are highlighted; the greatest benefit being that students taking the program have greater mastery of the liberal arts course material and develop better thinking and writing skills. (Contains 21 references.) (GLR)

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No. 64 Fall 1988

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Teaching-Learning Issues

THE ROLE OF RHETORIC IN ACADEMIC INQUIRY:
The Philosophy and Effect of the Writing to Learn Program at UTK

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This number of TEACHING/LEARNING ISSUES has been prepared by Linda Bensel-Meyers and Donald Samson, assistant professors of English, and Evelyn Nettles, a doctoral candidate in English, all from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. (Dr. Bensel-Meyers wrote the introduction and the section on writing across the curriculum theory; Dr. Samson wrote the section on the writing to learn program at UTK; and Ms. Nettles edited the article.)

You can not teach a man anything;
you can only help him to find it
within himself.

Galileo

Learning Research Center
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs are quite protean. Not only do they differ from institution to institution but they change shape as they become integrated into the mission of a particular college or university. They may begin merely as a way to improve a student's writing skills, based on the premise that reinforcing throughout the college years what the student learns in the freshman English program should foster improvement. All too often, though, increasing the amount of writing a student must do is akin to opening a Pandora's box of evils: How can students write if they cannot read, cannot apply knowledge to solve real-world problems, or have no conscious awareness of cultural values? When students can communicate effectively, they are not necessarily aware of their responsibility as communicators; their purpose has been to get the "A"—or to "get the teacher's goat"—or to get the highest paying job upon graduation. The question of what motivates our students to want to communicate forces us to consider what view of language we are inculcating with our WAC programs. Are we just adding to the student's bag of tricks, or are we fundamentally transforming the nature of an American education? As John Gage (1987) recently suggested in a survey of the composition profession, if we do not address all of these problems simultaneously, we are in danger of promulgating a "new sophism" (Chapman 44).

What the Ford Foundation sponsored Writing-to-Learn project at UTK demonstrates, though, is that a responsibly administered WAC program is adaptable, that it can adjust its methodology to address specific deficiencies in a student's preparation to write in different disciplines so that, upon graduation, the student has become a responsible communicator, approximating Cicero's Ideal Orator for modern times. Rather than viewing WAC purely as a way to increase the writing experiences of the students, this program has recognized the need to identify the role writing assignments play in improving students' understanding of course material. Too often, we find that it is not that students cannot write, but that they cannot write about

some subjects as well as about others, that they haven't learned how to adjust their writing to different rhetorical situations. For instance, English majors complain that they cannot understand what the science teacher wants, when, in fact, it is that they haven't yet learned how to think like a scientist. As the Ford Foundation project developed, we recognized that it is not just "writing" across the curriculum, but, as Bizzell (1986) has suggested, "rhetoric" across the curriculum, or even, as LeFevre (1987) has described it, "inventing" across the curriculum. To expand our understanding of the global nature of UTK's WAC experience, we must go even one step further and describe our efforts as developing a student's ability to "reason" across the curriculum, to synthesize what it is he/she has learned into a coherent and workable philosophy of life.

The Ford Foundation sponsored writing-to-learn project at UTK was designed to implement writing-to-learn methodology in lower division Liberal Arts courses and to determine its effectiveness. From fall 1986 through June 1988, the project enabled Liberal Arts faculty to use writing assignments better to help students master course material, assignments that asked for independent thought rather than repetition of information. The director of the project, Associate Dean Mary Richards, organized a core group of five Liberal Arts faculty who taught writing emphasis courses in the College of Liberal Arts. The five faculty formed a cross section of the College, representing the departments of history, philosophy, religious studies, women's studies, and classics. The purpose of the core group was to provide continuity in consultation and evaluation throughout the period of grant support. Dean Richards developed a program designed to provide writing specialists from the English Department faculty as consultants on writing for Liberal Arts faculty, to help them implement writing-to-learn methodology in their courses. The English Department faculty discussed writing-to-learn with the core faculty and examined their students' writing during the full year of implementing writing-to-learn methodology.

WAC THEORY

The English faculty who served as consultants to instructors of writing emphasis courses discovered that, to employ effectively writing assignments as a unique way to reason about a subject, we need to recognize the assumptions we are making about language as a necessary medium for knowledge. Three primary approaches to linguistic behavior are reflected in three predominant attitudes toward composition theory in use today: the traditional, the empirical, and the epistemic.

The first, the traditional, is today more in evidence outside of the

composition classroom, although it maintained control of composition textbooks throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is the view of language reflected in the current-traditional paradigm, where rhetoric has been defined as the study of the arrangement and expression of ideas (what Berlin has called "idea management"). In composition courses, this traditional view focused on the written product, on how to use the conventions of different rhetorical forms to transmit preconceived truths as clearly and objectively as possible. The fact that we have had difficulty letting go of the rhetorical modes as an effective approach to the teaching of composition is evidence that we feel safest when we approach language as merely a vessel for ideas, that we can teach the form of the written composition separate from its content. Although composition theory has changed its emphasis from the product that conveys meaning to examine the process of writing that makes meaning, professors in other fields still tend to hold a positivist view of language. This is reflected in their desire to assign writing to test what the students know rather than to teach the students how to think about the subject. For this reason, we still see proponents of the split-grading system, where a composition can receive an "A" for content and an "F" for expression. These professors are the ones who have the most difficulty assimilating writing assignments in their courses, for they feel uncomfortable failing a paper that, in their view, is written perfectly but says nothing.

In WAC pedagogy, the traditional view has given way to the empirical view, primarily due to James Britton's (1975) distinction between transactional and expressive writing. Instead of teaching our students that language is a means of transferring ideas from the writer's mind to the evaluator's, Britton advocates that we encourage students to use language to become personally engaged with the subject. Rather than emphasize how language can prove to others what is known, he suggests we emphasize how writing can help students discover what they think about the subject, so that writing becomes a process of self-expression more than a communication with others. By emphasizing expressive writing to help students make a subject their own, Britton shifted emphasis away from formal, graded assignments toward non-threatening, informal writing exercises, like the reading journals, in-class writing, and exploratory free-writes adopted by many WAC programs today.

The problem with advocating these assignments for use across the curriculum, though, is that they are often only partially understood and, hence, ineffectively employed. Many instructors who create assignments designed to stimulate more expressive writing have felt uneasy with the results, primarily because this gives them little

authority to evaluate the written product, since that would be tantamount to grading the student's feelings of—rather than knowledge about—the subject. Ideally, though, this type of writing, as Kinneavy (1971) has clarified it, is not merely "a simple discharge of emotion or a relaying of impressions" but an expression of "emotion . . . directed to an aim" (401). Understanding what that aim is, though, requires that we reach some agreement about how written language not merely expresses but is instrumental in the creation of academic knowledge.

Britton's (1970) invitation to personal writing appears to contradict one of the main tenets behind the cognitivists who are also part of this empirical approach to writing. As Piaget discovered, children develop in cognitive ability when they learn to move away from egocentric discourse. This de-centering process has been described by Lee Odell (1973) as "getting outside one's own frame of reference, understanding the thoughts, values, feelings of another person" (455). The problem, then, becomes not only how to make the student use writing to engage with the subject (i.e., move from arid transactional writing to expressive writing), but how to guide the student from personal engagement with the subject (i.e., egocentric writing) to explore the subject from several different points of view. Ultimately, as William Perry's (1970) research shows, this use of expressive writing should lead a student away from a belief in right and wrong answers to recognize the relative truth of different beliefs held by others. The aim, then, for academic writing would be to have the student achieve the level of knowledge where he/she could make an informed commitment, to evaluate as well as interpret, the discipline-specific information.

This aim leads us to the rhetorical basis of the composition theories that we describe as epistemic. Rather than focus on language as merely a sign for a fixed truth (the traditional school) or as merely a means to engage the writer personally with the subject (the empirical approach), the epistemic theorists focus on language as a social system by which knowledge is created through the interaction of writer and reader. As LeFevre (1987) puts it, through language "individuals interact with society and culture in a distinctive way to create something" (121). Or as Bruffee (1986) has explained the rhetorical process: "We generate knowledge by 'dealing with' our beliefs about the physical reality that shoves us around. Specifically, we generate knowledge by justifying those beliefs socially" (777). Or as Gage (1984) has revived Aristotle's views,

> knowledge can be considered as something that people do together, rather than as something which any one person, outside of discourse.

> has. Knowledge can be said to be valid, that is, to the extent that it can be shared, and is likely to need modification when minds bring new understandings to anything thus known (156).

This view of language use as a social act by which we construct knowledge together circumscribes the function of expressive writing. For just as Kuhn (1979) has described the development of knowledge as a creation of new thought from the basis of old paradigms, where we must converge with the established truths before we can diverge to discover new truths, the writer in any discipline must learn to engage with a subject from an established perspective, learn the types of questions the discipline asks, before he/she can advance knowledge in a significant way. As Toulmin (1972) describes the act of human understanding, "an individual's initiatives—whether social or conceptual—are an expression of his personal thought about collective problems" (36). In this perspective, we can have no ideas, or personal expression, in a vacuum, for all concepts that language expresses have been developed in a social context.

What this means for WAC theory is that, through the writing assignment, we need to initiate the student into the realm of discourse that constitutes the knowledge of a particular discipline. As Perelman (1969) defines it, "Initiation into a given discipline consists of communicating its rules, techniques, specific ideas, and presuppositions, as well as the method of criticizing its results in terms of the discipline's own requirements" (99). The expressive writing we assign, either through journal entries or in-class writings, should be less the egocentric speech of Piaget than the inner speech of Vygotsky (1962), where the student is aware of the nature of self-deliberation as an interaction between the student as novice and the student as initiate. Here the student is introduced to the particular questions of the discipline while encouraged to apply and test them. In this perspective of education as learning how we know what we know, the informal writing assignments are perhaps the most important (as well as the easiest to incorporate across the curriculum) because they emphasize not the subject being taught but how that subject is the product of a disciplined way of thinking. As Booth (1974) has described it, "the process of inquiry through discourse thus becomes more important than any possible conclusions, and what stultifies such fulfillment becomes demonstrably wrong" (137).

WRITING TO LEARN AT UTK

Writing-to-learn has proven very valuable in helping students master concepts in their course work and develop their writing skills. In writing-to-learn, writing about course material is used to help stu-

dents explore ideas in the material and develop their responses to them in writing assignments that are often very different from traditional academic papers (especially research papers). Journals (written in class and out), informal essays, and free writing encourage students to record their thoughts on the material, to question it and build on it by connecting the material to other course work and their experience. Writing is used to help the students learn; by writing, students also develop thinking and writing skills.

Each English writing specialist consulted with one of the core group and several other Liberal Arts faculty about using writing-to-learn methodology in their writing emphasis courses. The English faculty clarified the aim of the project: having students write to master course material and content (and indirectly to become better writers). They answered questions about the readings and reviewed the faculty's writing assignments, offering appropriate suggestions. They discussed the sequencing of writing assignments to prepare students for longer writing tasks. Most importantly, they suggested writing tasks adapted to a writing-to-learn methodology, including journal writing in class and out, free writing, process writing, formal paper assignments, and out-of-class essay question answers.

The consultants from the English Department discussed the concepts of writing-to-learn and writing across the curriculum with the core faculty and with other Liberal Arts faculty who participated in the program. The English consultants provided faculty with readings on writing across the curriculum and writing-to-learn by David Bartholomae, Janet Emig, Randall Freisinger, and Toby Fulwiler. They helped the faculty develop writing assignments that fulfilled the requirements for the writing emphasis courses and fit the objectives of writing-to-learn. During the winter, spring, and fall quarters of 1987, the English Department consultants met with faculty to design and revise assignments and to gather information on the success of the writing-to-learn assignments.

The effectiveness of the consultation service was determined by using holistic grading to score essay question answers written by students of faculty who had received consultation. In the fall of 1986, the core faculty, who had used traditional formal writing assignments in their writing emphasis classes in the fall quarter, developed a common essay question to be included on their final examinations that quarter, a question designed to ask students to apply what they learned in their course to a topic of broad, general interest.

Evaluation of those students' writing served as a baseline, and students' scores on similar questions in the next three quarters were compared with it to evaluate the implementation of writing-to-learn

methodology. The question for each quarter's final exams was agreed on by the core faculty. The questions used during the project are presented on the following three pages.

In subsequent quarters, the effectiveness of the consultation service and of the implementation of writing-to-learn methodology was evaluated by comparing the writing of the core faculty's students before and after the faculty had received consultation, and by examining the writing of other students in writing emphasis courses after other faculty had received consultation. (During the winter, spring, and fall quarters of 1987, Liberal Arts faculty teaching lower division writing emphasis courses were invited to join the project.)

In December 1986, Dr. Jack Armistead, an English Department faculty member (and now associate dean of Liberal Arts) who has worked with the Educational Testing Service on holistic scoring, developed an evaluation scale for the sample essays. He held training sessions with advanced graduate students in English who then scored the students' answers to the common question. Four hundred and eight essays from courses in the five disciplines were used to train the scorers and establish baseline statistics to use in evaluating the consultation service.

Holistic scoring was used to compare student performance in these courses before and after the introduction of writing-to-learn methodology, in order to see what general kinds of improvement, both in writing and in quality of thought in relation to course content, had taken place.

The scoring guide was designed to grade each essay on a scale of 5 (highest) to 1 (lowest) by measuring the effectiveness of the student's use of material from the course. The guide is reproduced on page 13. In an hour-and-a-half training session, the eight scorers read and discussed the implications of the question, to establish what the question asked students to do and not to do. Then they discussed holistic use of the scoring guide. From a packet of 20 samples (labeled alphabetically), they examined five essays, each of which had been assigned a different score by the trainer, based on the scoring guide. The scorers discussed how each essay fit the scoring criteria. They then evaluated several sets of three essays from the packet and discussed how they used the scoring guide to arrive at their scores.

During this and subsequent grading sessions in later quarters, each student's essay was read by two scorers who used alphanumeric codes (different for each scorer) so that the first evaluation would not influence the second. If two scorers' grades were off by more than a point, the essay was scored a third time. Midway through the grading, the scorers again graded three essays and discussed how they arrived

Student's Name_____

1) Essay Topic: 40 Minutes Section Number:_____

In a well-organized, coherently developed essay, use important ideas, works (artifacts), or events studied in this course to support a critical analysis of the passage quoted below. Write on the attached paper, both sides if necessary.

The passage is not drawn from assignments in this course, but you should relate it to the readings and concepts that we have studied. Do not merely explain what the passage means or summarize the information for its own sake. Analyze. Make a point.

For example, you could compare and contrast some of the ideas or opinions of this writer to some that we have studied. Or you could agree or disagree with the passage, using course materials to support your case. Or you could use course materials to explore the question, "What is most valuable to this writer: the individual? God? tradition? ideas? family? a larger community? a combination? something else?"

The Passage: This letter was written in 1944 by a Japanese pilot, Isao Matsuo, just before he engaged in a kamikaze attack.

Dear Parents,

Please congratulate me. I have been given a splendid opportunity to die. This is my last day. The destiny of our homeland hinges on the decisive battle in the seas to the south where I shall fall like a blossom from a radiant cherry tree.

I shall be a shield for His Majesty and die cleanly along with my squadron leader and other friends. I wish that I could be born seven times, each time to smite the enemy.

How I appreciate this chance to die like a man! I am grateful from the depths of my heart to the parents who have reared me with their constant prayer and tender love. And I am grateful as well to my squadron leader and superior officers who have looked after me as if I were their own son and given me such careful training.

Thank you, my parents, for the 23 years during which you have cared for me and inspired me. I hope that my present deed will in some small way repay what you have done for me. Think well of me and know that your Isao died for our country. This is my last wish, and there is nothing else that I desire.

I shall return in spirit and look forward to your visit at the Yasunkuni Shrine. Please take good care of yourselves.

How glorious is the Special Attack Corps' Giretsu Unit whose Suisei bombers will attack the enemy. Movie cameramen have been here to take our pictures. It is possible that you may see us in newsreels at the theater.

We are 16 warriors manning the bombers. May our death be as sudden and clean as the shattering of crystal.

Written at Manila on the eve of our sortie.

Isao

Student's Name_____

2) Essay Topic: 40 Minutes Section Number_____

In a well-organized, coherently developed essay, use important ideas, works (artifacts), or events studied in this course to support a critical analysis of the passage quoted below. Write on the attached paper, both sides if necessary.

The passage is not drawn from assignments in this course, but you should relate it to the readings and concepts that we have studied. Do not merely explain what the passage means or summarize the information for its own sake. Analyze. Make a point.

For example, you could compare and contrast some of the ideas or opinions of this writer to some that we have studied. Or you could agree or disagree with the passage, using course materials to support your case. Or you could use course materials to explore the question, "What is most valuable to this writer: rules? creativity? individual conviction? commitment to established institutions? something else?"

The Passage: This is an excerpt from Henry David Thoreau's essay *On Civil Disobedience*.

Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy is worse than the evil. It makes it worse. Why is it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not encourage its citizens to be on the alert to point out its faults, and do better than it would have them? Why does it always crucify Christ, and excommunicate Copernicus and Luther, and pronounce Washington and Franklin rebels?

Henry David Thoreau

Student's Name:_____

3) Essay Topic: 40 Minutes Section Number:_____

In a well-organized, coherently developed essay, use important ideas, works (artifacts), or events studied in this course to support a critical response to one or more passages quoted below. Write on the attached paper, both sides if necessary.

These passages are not drawn from assignments in this course, but you should relate the one(s) that you choose to the readings and concepts that we have studied. Do not merely explain what the passages might mean or summarize information for its own sake. Analyze. Make a point.

For example, you could compare and contrast some of these ideas or opinions to some that we have studied. Or you could agree or disagree with the author(s), using course materials to support your case. Or you could show how persons or events studied in this course exemplify the point(s) made in one or more of the passages.

The Passages:

1. There is no existence that is constant, either of our being or that of objects. —Michel de Montaigne

2. Man is the only animal that has the Moral Sense. It is the quality which enables him to do wrong. —Mark Twain

3. The human's most powerful metaphysical drive is to understand, to order, to sort out, and rearrange in ever more orderly and understandably constructive ways. —Buckminster Fuller

Scoring Guide

General Directions to Readers: Assign a score that reflects your judgment of the overall quality of the essay. Try to avoid focussing on one or more traits while dismissing others. After one attentive reading, place the paper at a level (from one to five) that most fairly represents its effectiveness as a whole composition. In some cases, an outstanding strength or weakness may be accounted for by raising or lowering the score by one point. Essays that do not seem to fall within the provisions of this guide should not be scored at all; please give them to Dr. Armistead.

5 These clearly focussed, well developed essays coherently employ important and specific ideas, events, or works in analyzing the passage(s). Writers of these essays demonstrate intellectual independence by the control they exercise over concepts and types of information. They demonstrate stylistic maturity by an effective command of organization, sentence structure, and diction. They are not, however, perfect.

4 These essays coherently analyze the passage(s), but they are less clearly focussed and less well developed. They tend to employ fewer, less specific, or less important ideas, events, or works from outside sources. They are well written but do not evince the sureness of touch and independence of mind that characterize the top papers. Despite some lapses in grammar, diction, or syntax, the writing demonstrates sufficient control over the elements of composition to present the ideas clearly.

3 These essays analyze the passage(s) but may be vague or poorly developed, and supporting evidence from outside sources may be thin, general, only tangentially relevant, or superficial. Although adequately written, they may be marred by several errors in mechanics, usage, sentence structure, or diction. Organization is evident, but it may not be fully realized or particularly effective.

2 These essays represent only partial completion of the assignment: they may contain virtually no analysis or may draw almost nothing from ideas or material outside the assignment itself. The writing is sufficient to convey the writer's ideas, but it may be poorly organized, unduly brief, or marred by a pattern of errors, suggesting weak control over the conventions of standard English.

1 These essays display several of the weaknesses of papers in the 2 category in a more severe form, so that the reader may have difficulty following the train of thought.

at their scores, to ensure adherence to scoring criteria throughout the session.

During the winter, spring, and fall quarters of 1987, the training sessions were repeated, and the scorers evaluated the students' answers to the common question. During this period, consultations with a growing number of faculty took place. Seven English Department faculty worked as consultants on the project for a total of 211 hours of actual consulting. A total of 42 Liberal Arts faculty received consultation during the project, and 15 advanced graduate students in English took part in scoring (8 to 10 a quarter). Four hundred and twenty-one student essays were scored in winter quarter 1987, 254 in spring quarter 1987, and 365 in fall quarter 1987.

Students' scores on the common essay question improved over the course of the project, suggesting that consultation with English staff and use of writing-to-learn methodology may have contributed to improved student learning and writing. Table I presents the scores by examination period, with the most important statistic, the percentage of essays scoring 4.0 or higher, in the far right column.

In the December 1987 scoring, the scores of essays written by students in the core faculty's courses were compared to the other students' essay scores. The averages were identical, suggesting that the scoring method is reliable.

TABLE I. Examination Question Scores

Scoring Date	# Essays	Average Score	Splits	Scores Above 4.0
12/86	408	3.03	11%	22%
3/87	421	3.07	15%	21%
6/87	254	3.08	7%	24%
12/87	365	3.12	7%	30%

"Splits" refers to essays that received grades differing by more than one point (for instance, a 5 and a 3). In this case, the scores were averaged. If the two scores on an essay differed by more than two points, the essay was scored a third time and the variant grade dropped. The reduced percentage of splits in the June and December scorings suggests increased reliability in the application of the scoring guide used in the holistic scoring.

Observations

The writing-to-learn project at UTK revealed some lessons that we believe are valuable to faculty considering such a program.

Differing degrees of faculty interest in such a program are to be expected, and voluntary participation is advisable. At UTK, Liberal Arts faculty were not required or pressured to participate. Several did decline. Some who participated needed assurance that using writing-to-learn effectively would not necessarily increase their work load but might decrease it at the same time student learning is increased. It is very important for writing consultants on such a project to be sensitive to the concerns of the faculty to ensure their full cooperation in the program.

Some faculty require or request more consultation than others, given the nature of their courses and their familiarity with how to use writing effectively in their courses. Sometimes one or two consultations are sufficient to develop writing assignments that better promote mastery of course material.

Many Liberal Arts faculty already use writing well to promote learning in their courses but are eager for suggestions, and many faculty who do not have confidence in their assignments are even more eager to use consultants for help.

Passages for common questions broad enough to be used in different courses but specific enough to require the students to bring to bear particular ideas and information from the course in an essay question answer can be difficult to find; the best way to discover them is to solicit suggestions from the faculty using writing-to-learn in their liberal arts courses.

Scoring essays for a writing-to-learn program is more complicated than other holistic scoring that focuses more on the writing ability reflected in an essay and less on a combination of writing ability and use of concepts and details from a specific course. The scoring guide and instruction of scorers are more difficult to effect, given the dual focus, but consistency within and across evaluation sessions suggests that holistic scoring can measure writing ability and mastery of course content.

Organizing and supervising such a project takes a great deal of time and energy, so any group planning such a project needs strong support, especially in released time.

Evaluative Comments

Comments of Liberal Arts faculty, English faculty, students, and graders suggest that the writing-to-learn program not only demonstrated a successful way to implement writing-to-learn methodology but also was recognized as a valuable experience.

At the end of each quarter, faculty were invited to evaluate the consultation they had received. No attempt was made to quantify faculty response, but it was very favorable. Most faculty indicated that they had changed or were planning to change their writing assignments as a result of the consultations. Faculty indicated that they thought the writing assignments were useful and reported that students responded favorably to them, especially journal writing. As one put it: "The students' journals forced them to focus on class topics in a way they would not have done otherwise." Another faculty member reported that in a class of 250 students in music history, only 10 students did not respond positively to the journal-writing assignments in the course. Several faculty offered suggestions to make the consultation service more effective, including having faculty outside the English Department serve as consultants. Said one faculty member: "I enjoyed receiving materials to go over on my own and from which to select assignment ideas and ideas about evaluation. The improvement might be simply to keep them coming!"

Students who had done assignments using writing-to- learn methodology commented on the value of such assignments for clarifying course concepts. In general, students commented that the assignments led them to think more about ideas. As one student said about the writing assignments in a course in mythology: "The papers were designed to make you think. . . . Both were good because you had to marshal materials and draw conclusions. . . . Very good!"

The English Department staff working as consultants on the project found it very valuable. One consultant stated: "Working with other faculty provided me with a clearer sense of what my writing students are required to do in other courses. This sort of information should enable us to work toward a more realistic match between what we teach our students and what other faculty expect of them." This information can also be valuable in designing writing courses. Another consultant stated: "The program . . . aided the English faculty consultants in their efforts to reconceptualize the freshman composition program as an introduction to the critical reading and thinking skills necessary for written inquiry."

The graders of the student essays felt that their work with holistic grading of students' essays was valuable in their professional development. One grader reported: "As a result of my participation in the evaluation, I am a more efficient grader of compositions. The techniques of holistic assessment are very useful." Said another: "The Ford Foundation training has helped me to assess papers, even longer ones, as a complete unit instead of a sentence-by-sentence accumulation of material."

As the graders learned more about holistic grading, they saw how

it complements traditional grading of papers by marking errors with a system such as that in the *Harbrace College Handbook*: "The Harbrace methods are still needed to improve the nuts and bolts of writing, but the holistic methods can help greatly to improve standardization among graders."

Writing-to-Learn Methodology

The writing-to-learn methodology developed at UTK was based on a process that can be summarized in a series of steps involving a writing consultant and an interested faculty member:

1. Writing staff provide information on the theory and aims of writing-to-learn, first through readings such as those listed earlier in this report, then in conversation with the faculty.

2. Writing staff review the content, objectives, and student population of the course in which writing-to-learn methodology is to be implemented.

3. Writing staff suggest appropriate writing formats to promote students' mastery of course information and content. For courses taught largely by lecture, in-class and out-of-class journal writing can be used effectively to engage students with concepts from the course. Smaller discussion courses can use free writing, journal writing, and more structured assignments such as applying concepts from the course to material from outside the course, as students did with the questions reproduced in this report.

4. Writing staff advise faculty on how those students whose writing is weak can be helped in a writing center, writing laboratory, or a writing course designed to improve the students' writing. Also, even if faculty are familiar with the principles and practice of holistic grading, many profit from discussion of holistic grading with the writing staff.

Conclusion

A program like the Ford Foundation sponsored writing-to-learn program at UTK is valuable for a number of reasons.

- Students profit from writing-to-learn methodology, as evidenced by increased abilities reflected in the essay scores and their own comments in course evaluations.

- Faculty who are not sure how to use writing effectively to promote learning or who have been unable to establish assignments that fit well the particular demands of their course can get assistance from writing experts in designing writing assignments that can promote

student learning without burdening the instructors.

- Even faculty who use writing well to promote learning gain from consultation with experts in using writing.
- More people (including English faculty) learn about writing across the curriculum and writing-to-learn. Greater familiarity with efforts to improve student writing translates into greater communication among faculty about writing and greater support for programs to improve student writing, such as writing centers. This was the case at UTK, where a Task Force on Writing and Critical Reasoning grew out of the Ford Foundation project work. As one consultant said: "The project's main long-term benefit may well prove to be the increased awareness, involvement, and support that college- and university-level administrators are now showing for the teaching of writing."
- Writing staff helping other faculty encounter problem-solving situations that can lead to insights the writing staff may not have had before, and to new techniques. These insights and techniques can be valuable in writing courses as well as in courses in other disciplines.
- Such a project can help a college or university gather information about its programs. For example, UTK staff discovered that the writing emphasis concept and requirements needed clearer definition and that many students in writing emphasis courses are freshmen who have not completed freshman composition. This information proved useful in revising the definition of and requirements for the writing emphasis courses.
- Writing staff can learn from other faculty the problems students have in their writing in courses outside the English Department. This information can be relayed to all writing instructors and used for curriculum planning.

The greatest benefit from using writing-to-learn methodology in undergraduate courses is its value in improving the students' educational experience. The Ford Foundation writing-to-learn project at UTK revealed to faculty, administrators, and students that writing-to-learn assignments in liberal arts courses can promote mastery of course material and help students develop thinking and writing skills.

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